
The MCA Advisory

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

Volume 14 Number 2

February 2011

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Dues: \$30.00/year; 50.00/2 years

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From the Editor

Thelma and I are still laboring under a new set of logistics. It has been difficult to transition to new equipment for composition as well as a new arrangement for printing. We are running behind schedule and will inevitably make some mistakes, for which our apologies.

Fortunately, the material herein is outstanding. Tony Lopez has made some important discoveries regarding the work of Thomas Simon, one of Britain's foremost engravers. Following his contribution George Fuld and Max Spiegel bring a new degree of order to the study of Washington oval peace medals. Unfortunately, there was not room to fit this piece in the February issue but it will appear in March.

Book Review—British Commemorative Medals and Their Value by Christopher Eimer (by John W. Adams)

An earlier version of this book was published in 1986. In 1905, Mr. Eimer set about a simple revision, intending to update the values and be done with it. However, having done that and made a few additions, it became apparent that the corpus needed to be expanded, to include the last 25 years. Once having done that, it became apparent that the earlier images were relatively shabby and hence needed complete replacement. What was designed to be a one year project had, in the end, become a five year project. However, the final result is a brand new book, one that is an instant classic.

Mr. Eimer succeeds in classifying 2230 medals; the first issued in 1087 and last almost a millennium later in 2010. Each description, though necessarily brief, is thorough, containing pertinent information on date of issue, subject, legend (obverse and reverse), engraver, diameter, series classification and value by both

condition and metal. The end result is truly encyclopedic.

The word "Encyclopedic" suggests that the content of the book is dry and boring. Such is hardly the case. To make the point, we equate from the description of Eimer 770, "Charles Genevieve Louis Auguste André Timothée De Beaumont D'Éon (1782-1810). French ambassador, courtier, and a transvestite of considerable renown. In 1777 a civil court action was fought by two men in respect of a wager concerning D'Éon's gender, which had aroused much curiosity and financial speculation during the time he was in London. The affair was a minor cause célèbre and only entirely resolved on his death. See London Magazine (September, 1777)."

Such pithy background is enhanced by the author's deep knowledge of the subject matter. Mr. Eimer suggests that the D'Éon medal is linked to the Hume medal of 1776 and the Franklin (wearing a cap) medal of 1777. Thus, if the D'Éon medal was made in England—and where else would it have been made?—then the 1777 Franklin medal was made in England, a treasonous act given the war going on at the time.

The book contains nearly 100 pages of images in high resolution (for the most part) color.

As if 2230 listings were not more than any mortal can digest, the author adds a panoply of supporting sections. These include a bibliography, a concordance with the 1987 work, an index of medalists (the best such we have seen), a listing of medallists abbreviations, a listing of the sources of the illustrations and an excellent general index. Altogether, these sections make the book easier to use and/or provide nuances for advanced students.

The reason to buy the book is that not owning is a deprivation.

Thomas Simon (by Tony Lopez)

In his biographical entry for Thomas Simon, Leonard Forrer makes these two statements:

- 1) “His fame as an Engraver of coin and medal dies stands unrivaled in the British series;” and
- 2) “. . . born about 1623“. these statements after we develop our evidence.

Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was granted the province of Maryland by Charles I. in 1632. This fact prompted Edward Hawkins in *Medallic Illustrations* to assign this date to the three “Baltimore” medals, he describes in volume I of his opus. Betts numbers the three medals 34, 35 and 36, likewise assigning them the date of 1632.

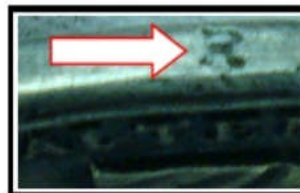
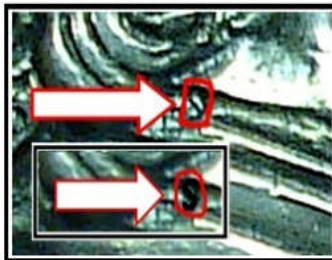
As will become apparent from the images below, each of the three medals carries an “S” on both its obverse and reverse. This observation, which has not been made heretofore, marks the three medals as the work of Thomas Simon. In view of Forrer’s first comment, Simon’s authorship gives the medals an additional distinction. Moreover, if Simon’s date of birth as given by Forrer is correct (1632), then one must either believe that Simon executed them at the age of nine or that a later dating is appropriate.

As per Figure 1 below, Simon also designed the 1637 Scottish Rebellion medal. The design of the obverse is copied from Brunswick multi-thalers of the period, so it may indeed have been the work of a 16 year old artisan. The Baltimore medals are of a higher order of workmanship and, so, would have come later, yet before 1645 when Simon changed his monogram to “TS.” In an earlier article in “The MCA Advisory,” we find that Betts 35 was in use as an Indian peace medal in the year 1642.

Betts 34 Cecil Calvert/Anne Arundel Maryland Medal

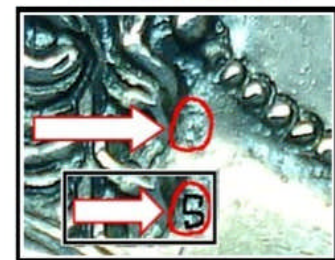


Calvert Obverse



Ready "R" Edgemark

Arundel Reverse



The (Betts 34) Cecil Calvert/Anne Arundel Maryland medal design includes Thomas Simon's "S" mark on both sides. Simon left his distinctively styled mark hidden against the hair on the right shoulder in nearly identical locations on both the Calvert and Arundel three-quarters facing busts. Acquired circa 1906, this Maryland Historical Society example is actually an electrotype manufactured by Robert Ready with his "R" mark on the edge, likely using the British Museum Betts 34 medal as a matrix. The Simon marks are clearly identifiable on this piece; it was used as Simon's "S" marks sit relatively high on the relief of the medal, and quickly wear down from use (especially on the Arundel reverse). A careful inspection will still reveal at least traces of Simon's mark on the cast/chased silver examples.

Figure 1

1639 Scottish Rebellion Medal by Thomas Simon



The 1639 Scottish Rebellion medals are the earliest attributed to Thomas Simon in *Medallic Illustrations* (above is MI I, 282/91). This medal has the same style script "S" engraver's mark seen on the three Maryland medals. These are the only Simon medals in which he used this style "S" initial alone as his mark, very likely dating the Maryland medals from 1639-1643. Later Simon would use no mark, and by the mid 1640's was using scripted "TS" initials, or various marks containing portions of his first, and his entire last name.

Figure 2



The Ford example of the Calvert Maryland Map medal (Betts 35) reveals Thomas Simon's "S" "engraver's" mark on both the obverse and reverse. The script style "S" appears to have been chased into the medals design.



Obverse Closeup



Reverse Closeup

Figure 3

The Betts 35 VIRGINAE Inscription



Maryland Historical Society

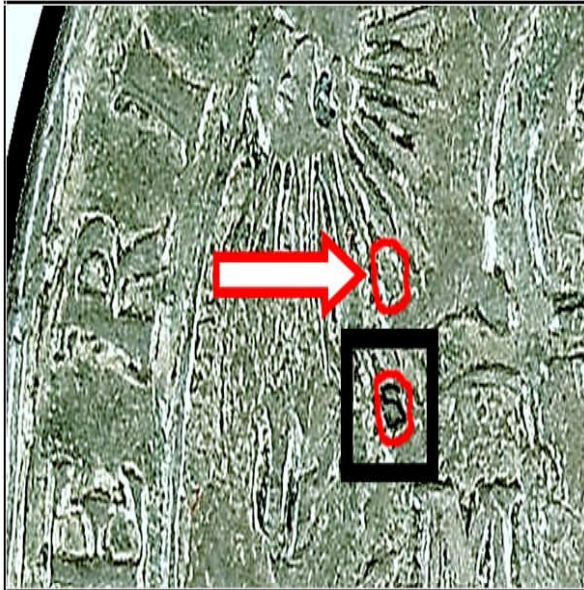


ex John J. Ford Jr. Collection



An important detail of the (Betts 34) Calvert Maryland Map medal's design has apparently been previously unrecorded. The reverse map design clearly includes the inscription "VIRGINAE" above and to the right of the sun on the medal's design. The map design closely resembles that of John Smith's 1612 map of Virginia and others from before 1640, with North facing to the right. The "VIRGINAE" is correctly placed geographically, across from Maryland on the Potomac, near modern-day Belvedere Beach, Virginia.

Figure 3



British Museum



Maryland Historical Society

There are only three known examples of the (Betts 35) Calvert Maryland Map medal. Other than Ford, the two remaining examples reside in the collections of the British Museum and Maryland Historical Society. Both of these also include Thomas Simon's Mark. Seen at left, the British Museum example, with hanger, has the "S" engraver's mark chased, and in the same location as that seen on Ford. (The inset below shows the location, within the red circle above, of the difficult to spot "S" mark in the low contrast image.) The Maryland Historical Society example, shown at right, is ex-Spink and originates from the Calvert Family collection. It appears to be a proof with many differences in design detail from the Ford and BM examples, and is missing a hanger. The MdHS example has a more distinct "S" mark likely placed by use of a punch.

Figure 4

Letters to the Editor

John,

Thanks so much for enlightening us with your article on this subject.

I am the direct descendant of a Frenchman who survived several battles against the British, and who was with his Company and the Guyenne Regiment in the center of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, and then remained in Canada after the war. His company was also at the center of the Battle for Fort Ticonderoga.

I have seen a few of these medals here and there and your article perfectly illustrates how important these battles were to history.

The Admiral Boscawen medal would fit nicely alongside a painting I have of a pitched naval encounter in which he commanded the English Forces.

Thanks again for sharing a part of your collection, and your knowledge of them!

Paul G. Lajoie
Droque-dit-Lajoie Genealogist
Statue of Liberty Medals/Exonumia Collector

Hi Tony, (Lopez)

Note attached article on the Voltaire medal of 1778 in a contemporary newspaper. Removes any doubt as to when or how it was issued.

George Fuld

Thanks George, (Fuld)

I was aware of that newspaper article - which appeared verbatim in various other newspapers in England and America. I have attached a picture of the original article. I believe it is a "planted" piece, since there is absolutely no other evidence that Voltaire or Franklin made the medal and no reports in France. Strange that the only contemporaneous written evidence of the medal comes from England. Of course, we cannot dismiss the

letters from Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley of July 17th and 19th 1777 with key references to the "brazen head medal" and "striking medals from the bronze" for the "patron of Liberty" etc?

Moreover, if in fact Voltaire and Franklin made the medal in Paris, they also must have made the 1777 Franklin of Philadelphia, David Hume, and Chevalier D'Éon medal, beyond unlikely - impossible. I cannot see where Voltaire or Franklin would celebrate D'Éon or Hume! Voltaire and Franklin commemorating a transvestite or Hume's racist beliefs? In particular, Franklin's writings clearly show he was an abolitionist!

Other than the matching punches on the four medals, which I have already written about, there exists a Washington Voltaire medal overstruck on a 1777 D'Éon medal! What more proof does everyone need? I have attached pictures of the overstruck medal (including close-ups).

At some point we need to decide that philosophically and historically there is no way Voltaire and Franklin made the medal(s) in Paris, and the mounting historic and physical evidence against this possibility, to me, trumps the newspaper release. Matching punches, an overstruck medal, 1777 letters, well documented records of Voltaire's severe illness quickly leading to his death, and his brief meetings with Franklin; none of which allows for the possibility of their involvement in the production of these medals.

Again, lacking any other explanation for the contradictory newspaper release, I believe Wedgwood or Bentley planted the article; they certainly were well connected enough to do so. Whether they were concerned about negative consequences from the medal is obvious, and revealed in the 1777 correspondence.

Best,

Tony Lopez



Hello everyone, (MCA Board)

I enjoyed talking to all of you today.

Thank you for indulging me with the "doctored" Washington medal picture

I wanted to send the attached graphic I put together that shows what was done...

Best,

Tony Lopez



John,

I have attached a high resolution photo for the Advisory.

Best

Tony Lopez

Subject: RE: Graphic showing Washington Medal Composite

Hi Tony

This is the first time I have seen your WBB gold - must have missed your earlier correspondence.

Pretty convincing. I will certainly use it in the February issue, if I may.

Regarding Betts 160, the HONOS ET VIRTU medal: there is an example in the Public Archives of Canada. Can your high strength search techniques find me an image or must I sweet talk my way through the PAC organizational table?

You should be our speaker in August; I'll happily advance the slides for you.

Best,

John Adams



Hi Tony:

Regarding the image of Washington on the Voltaire medal which you transferred to the WBB medal: I had given a talk in 1999 at the ANS about the images of Washington on early medals. The problem with assuming that the image of Washington on the Voltaire medal was some artist's impression of Washington taken from life, and not a derivative of someone else's portrait, is simply that in 1778 there were very few images of Washington extant. There was an early 1772 portrait by Charles Wilson Peale showing Washington in his British officer's regalia (still hanging in Mount Vernon), then a couple of later portraits from 1776-1778, including another portrait by Peale in 1776. These images were later used as the basis for prints of varying quality, but basically in 1778, unless someone actually visited Washington (as Houdon did in 1785 and then took his life mask back to Paris, and Joseph Wright did earlier in 1783), anyone trying to paint or sculpt Washington in Europe would have had to work from reputation and imagination. I doubt the engraver of Voltaire medal had seen or visited

Washington prior to being pressed into service
to produce the medal commissioned by Voltaire.

David Menchell